

Student Profile:

Shannon Fox

Skyline College – Surgical Technology



In June of 2015, Shannon Fox wore her first graduation cap and gown. As a member of the Allied Health Career Advancement Academy (CAA) at Skyline College in San Bruno, California, Shannon crossed the stage to receive her Associate of Science Degree in Surgical Technology while her family cheered her on.

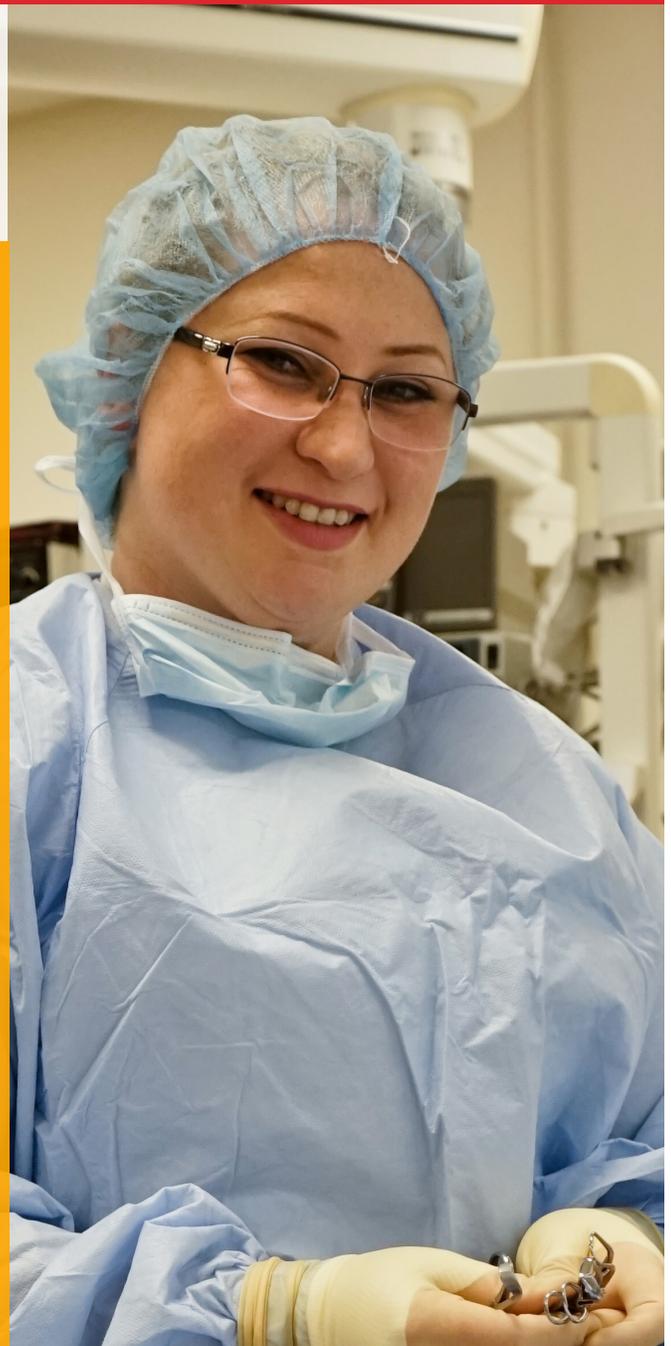
Entering college was a big step for Shannon, who earned her GED after working in banking for 11 years. After witnessing the medical care her father received, Shannon realized that her heart and passion were in the medical field. "I had no college experience... so for me, I had to just start from the beginning," she recalls. From the day she met with a CAA counselor, she had the help she needed to select classes, enroll, and set her sights on a degree. "They were preparing you to be successful in college," she says, "especially after not being in school for so long."

Enrolling in the CAA also connected Shannon to the campus support services that would make her journey easier. "[They] walked us through the whole school and showed us around the health center, the financial aid center, and the library." She enrolled in math tutoring, applied for scholarships, and received her health care at the campus clinic.

Like many of her peers, Shannon hadn't yet decided what job would suit her best. The Gateway to Healthcare course exposed her to the various allied health certificate and degree programs available at the College and across the District, and her CAA professors and counselor were there to help her determine her next steps. Shannon also appreciated that all four of her classes that semester were contextualized to the healthcare professions, so she could keep her sights on her career goals while strengthening her basic academic skills: "Your English, your math teacher, your science teacher... they're all on the same page. Your math is science, and your English is still science."

During her two externships at local hospitals, she learned how to apply her classroom learning to the real-life challenges of working in a surgical setting, and she loved it. "When you're in school," she says, "you're learning [from a] book, but it's in the hands-on [where you really learn how to save somebody's life]"

Shannon is now preparing to start a full-time Surgical Technologist position at Seton Medical Center, and she intends to return to school to earn a Bachelor of Science degree. "I have so much to learn right now in my field," she says. The CAA gave her confidence to pursue these dreams. "Never think that you can't do it, because the resources, they're out there."



Career Advancement Academies

The California Community Colleges' Career Advancement Academies (CAAs) were established in 2007 as bridges to college and high wage careers for low-income young adults who face academic and personal barriers to postsecondary education and employment. The CAAs integrate several elements that work together to accelerate student progress:

- Contextualized basic English and math instruction
- Technical training in high-demand occupations and industries
- Work readiness training and career guidance
- Academic and retention counseling
- Support services and financial assistance
- Peer support from a cohort of CAA students

